

# Doctor of Philosophy Degree

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Middle Tennessee State University offers the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in Economics, English, and Human Performance. The Ph.D. degree is offered for the purpose of developing doctoral-level expertise combining pedagogy with scholarly achievement and research excellence (applied or theoretical) in the fields of economics, English, or human performance. Above all, the Ph.D. recipient from MTSU is a learned person who has acquired advanced academic skills and is well prepared to teach at the collegiate level, conduct independent scholarly investigation, and provide service to the private and public sectors associated with her/his academic discipline.

## Admission

General admission requirements for the Ph.D. degree may be found in the admission section of this catalog. Applicants for admission to this degree objective must hold a baccalaureate degree. Although a master's degree is not a general University requirement, each graduate program has the option of establishing such a requisite.

## University Requirements Leading to the Ph.D. Degree

Following are the minimum University requirements that must be met to be eligible for the granting of the Ph.D. degree. **In addition, please note that each individual Ph.D. program has established distinct curricular requirements that are specific to that program. Please refer to the applicable graduate program section in this catalog.**

## General Course and Credit Requirements

The required minimum is 60 semester hours of coursework with at least two-thirds of the program at the 7000 level. No more than 12 semester hours of dissertation research (course 7640) may be applied toward this 60-hour requirement. If approved by the student's graduate advisor, up to 12 semester hours of coursework completed at the master's level may be applied toward this 60-hour requirement. In the case of a D.A. recipient from MTSU, additional hours may be applied toward the 60-hour requirement if recommended by the graduate advisor and approved by the dean of Graduate Studies.

### The 60-credit requirement must include the following:

- a. At least 42 hours in discipline-specific coursework. Undergraduate or dual-listed 4000/5000 courses (or their equivalents) **cannot** be used toward this requirement.

- b. At least 12 semester hours for the dissertation research (course 7640).

**NOTE:** Once a Ph.D. student has begun taking dissertation research, he/she is **expected** to enroll in **at least 1** semester hour of dissertation research (exclusive of Summer semester) **until** the dissertation is **completed**. Thus, Ph.D. students normally enroll for more than 12 total semester hours of dissertation research.

- c. At least six (6) semester hours (two courses) in an educational pedagogy core. MTSU recognizes that competency and understanding of current teaching strategies and technologies is an important component of a contemporary, well-rounded Ph.D. curriculum. Thus an educational core consisting of at least two 3-credit pedagogy courses is required. Please refer to the applicable graduate program section in this catalog for your specific pedagogy requirement.

## Additional Program Requirements

Each doctoral program establishes degree requirements which are specific to that discipline and **may be in excess of the minimum University requirements**. Students should consult the appropriate graduate program section in this catalog. The graduate advisor/director of each graduate program, in consultation with the advisory committee when relevant, may also specify additional requirements such as prerequisites, a reading knowledge of foreign language(s), a working knowledge of statistics, computer literacy, or specific courses related to graduate teaching assistantships or research assistantships.

## Pre-dissertation Advisory Committee

As soon as practicable, each Ph.D. student will be assigned a three-person advisory committee officially constituted by the dean of the College of Graduate Studies. The committee is recommended by the graduate advisor, in consultation with the student and the potential major professor. If warranted, the committee membership may be reconstituted upon a recommendation from the graduate advisor and approval by the dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

Beginning shortly after constitution of the advisory committee, the student should meet frequently with the committee members. The committee provides academic guidance to formulate a curricular plan best suited for the academic needs and interests of the student. This pre-candidacy stage permits optimal flexibility in the event of modified academic interests.

## Preliminary Examination

Each Ph.D. student may be required to take a preliminary examination administered by a graduate program. The examination will be used to assess specialized and general knowledge of the major area as well as writing skills. The results of the preliminary exam should be used, in part, to plan the student's academic program. To be eligible to take this preliminary examination, the student must be fully admitted to the College of Graduate Studies and to the graduate program. Programs may have additional requirements.

## Qualifying Examinations

The student must pass written and/or oral comprehensive qualifying examinations after having completed all coursework required for the Ph.D. degree (or when enrolled in the last course of the program of study, exclusive of the dissertation). The student must be in good academic standing and must have at least a 3.25 grade point average in all graduate work at the time the Intent to Schedule the Qualifying Examination form is filed. The qualifying examinations are intended to assess whether a candidate is qualified to continue in a doctoral program and advance to candidacy.

The written examinations are given at least one month before the close of the Fall, Spring, and/or Summer semesters. Permission for the Ph.D. student to schedule the qualifying examination requires the approval of the student's advisory committee and the dean of the College of Graduate Studies. Applications may be obtained from the Graduate Office or the department. The deadlines for submitting these applications may be found in the calendar section of this catalog.

A satisfactory or passing performance on the written and/or oral examinations means that the candidate is qualified to continue the program as planned. A less than satisfactory outcome on any component of the qualifying examinations may result in additional academic requirements and/or a re-examination. A re-examination may be given only once. A fail decision results in a recommendation to the dean of the College of Graduate Studies for academic dismissal. The student may appeal the dismissal recommendation, for cause, to the Appeal Subcommittee of the Graduate Council via the chair of the Graduate Council or the dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

### Written Qualifying Examination

1. The purpose of the written examination is to evaluate the candidate's overall knowledge of the field, integrative skills, ability to organize material, and competency in written expression. The maximum time limit for the written examination is eight hours.
2. The written examination is administered by the major department (i.e., the graduate program).
3. The graded written examinations are maintained in the department and are available to the student upon request.

### Oral Qualifying Examination

The oral examination is administered by the student's advisory committee and covers the candidate's area of specialization and general knowledge. The committee evaluates the candidate's breadth of knowledge of the field(s), integration and problem-solving skills, competency in oral expression, and potential for conducting independent research.

## Advancement to Candidacy

After having successfully completed the qualifying examination, the student must file an Advancement to Candidacy

application with the dean of the College of Graduate Studies. At this time the dissertation committee is formally constituted and usually has the same membership as the pre-dissertation advisory committee, although this is not mandatory. For example, should the student's research area change, it may be relevant to replace one or more of the original advisory committee members with faculty better qualified to provide research mentoring in the new area of inquiry. The degree plan as approved by the student's advisory committee, as well as certification by the student's advisory committee of successful completion of the qualifying examinations, is listed on the Advancement to Candidacy form. Upon approval, the College of Graduate Studies will notify the applicant of advancement to candidacy.

Before an applicant is officially admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree, the student must have satisfied the following requirements:

1. An Advancement to Candidacy form and an Intent to Graduate form must be filed by the deadlines published in the Graduate Catalog, the Schedule Book, and posted on department bulletin boards on campus. Normally, there are few extension exceptions granted if these forms are not submitted by the listed deadlines.
2. The student must have at least a 3.25 grade point average on all coursework listed on the candidacy forms as well as any other graduate work undertaken at Middle Tennessee State University within the specified time limit (10 years). Grades of D or F are not accepted for any graduate degree credit, and no more than seven (7) hours of C grade may count toward Ph.D. degree requirements. However, all C, D, and F grades will be included in the student's GPA computation, unless otherwise exempted by the University repeat policy.
3. The student's entire program, including the dissertation, must be acceptable to the dissertation committee, department chair and/or director of graduate studies, and the dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

## Defense of Dissertation

After the completion of the dissertation and all other prescribed work for the degree, candidates will be given a final oral examination dealing primarily with the dissertation and its relation to the candidate's major field of study. This examination will be conducted by the student's dissertation committee. All members must be present at the examination. If the student's performance on this examination is satisfactory as judged by the committee, all requirements for the degree will be completed upon approval of the dissertation, completion of all prescribed coursework (including all incompletes), and attainment of University minimums.

## Residency

Residency requirements will be established by each program, pending Graduate Council approval.

## Time Limit

There is a ten-year limit for completing all Ph.D. degree requirements. Thus, all coursework offered toward the doctoral degree as well as the dissertation must be completed within ten years after matriculation (i.e., the first semester of enrollment).

## Transfer Credits

Only coursework completed at an accredited institution that would count toward the doctorate there will be considered for approval as transfer credit toward the Doctor of Philosophy coursework requirement at MTSU. Additional information on transfer credit may be found in the section on academic regulations.

